NOMINATION OF CHARLES ESQUE FLEMING

Madam President, tomorrow, in addition to confirming Ms. Brennan, the Senate will consider the nominations of Charles Fleming and Federal Magistrate Judge David Ruiz, both of whom are nominated to also serve in the Northern District.

Mr. Fleming is an assistant public defender, which is not always the route to being a Federal judge, but it is a key, key, key part of our judicial system. He is an assistant public defender in the Northern District, serving as trial team leader in the Northern District's largest public defender branch.

A career public servant, Mr. Fleming has extensive trial experience in Federal court, having served as a Federal public defender for 30 years. If confirmed, he would be the only Black man currently serving as an active-duty Federal district court judge for the Northern District.

Mr. Fleming has received uniformly enthusiastic reviews from judges he has appeared before and from attorneys he has tried cases against. As a lead public defender, he takes on what his supervisor has described as the "most difficult and challenging cases," as you can imagine. In his cases, he has always displayed exceptional empathy not only toward clients but also toward the victims of crime. One story illustrates his character well.

He was representing an individual charged with committing a violent crime. According to the judge, when making his arguments for what he believed was a fair sentence for his client, Mr. Fleming turned and faced the victim and her family. The judge said Mr. Fleming didn't alter his arguments, but he wanted to accord the victim and her family the dignity of hearing directly from him, the public defender.

That is the kind of empathy and respect we need on the bench. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting his nomination.

NOMINATION OF DAVID AUGUSTIN RUIZ

Madam President, the third judge, David Ruiz, has served as a Federal magistrate judge in the Northern District for 5 years. Before that, he served for 16 years as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Northern District and as a private practitioner.

As an assistant U.S. attorney and in private practice, he took on a wide spectrum of cases. Those who worked with him praised his temperament and his intellect and described him as "unflappable." However, perhaps Judge Ruiz's most powerful endorsement came from the judges who are already seated in the Northern District who selected him to serve as one of their magistrate judges. They selected Judge Ruiz to oversee groundbreaking, multimillion-dollar, multidistrict litigation involving the manufacturers and distributors of opioids, which have done huge damage to families and communities across our State.

He is also poised to make history as the first Latino district judge ever to sit in the Northern District. If this body concurs, as the Judiciary Committee did, he will become Ohio's first ever Latino Federal judge. He is the grandson of immigrants. He is a descendant of migrant farmworkers who picked fruit in the fields of Texas and Michigan to provide better lives for their families. Judge Ruiz's success embodies the American dream of generations of immigrants.

Finally, I want to thank publicly, in this forum, all of the members of the bipartisan commission who recommended these nominees to Senator PORTMAN and me.

When I first came to the Senate, Senator Voinovich and I established this bipartisan commission process to help identify the best candidates for these important jobs. I am proud of the work that we have done with Senator PORTMAN to continue that tradition through Presidents of both parties.

The members took considerable time out of their busy schedules to identify and interview potential candidates. They undertook this task to ensure that the people living in the Northern District had access to justice and a bench that looks like the people they serve. This is by far the most diverse set of U.S. attorneys, U.S. Marshals, and U.S. Federal judges we have had ever in my State.

I thank the members of the commission for their work. I would particularly like to mention my representatives on this commission: Mohamed Al-Hamdani, Paul Demarco, Barbara Doseck, Dennis Eckart, Kayla Griffin, Jacqueline Johnson, Barbara Lum, Carole Rendon, Carter Stewart, and Margaret Wong. I want to especially thank the chair of our commission, Joyce Goldstein, who put so much effort and time into this and who put so much energy into ensuring this effort was a success. The Northern District of Ohio is better off because of their work.

Dr. King wrote: "[P]rogress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability." Each of these nominees will serve as wheels of progress for our State and for our country. I don't make predictions in politics often, but I am certain that every Member of this body, Republican and Democrat, who votes for these three judges will always be glad that they did.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes so that they can get to work immediately serving the people of my great State.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, this week, the Senate will consider three judicial nominees for the Northern District of Ohio.

Before I speak on the nominees themselves, I would like to commend Senators Brown and Portman for working across the aisle to develop a bipartisan selection process.

All three of these nominees were recommended to the White House through a judicial commission that Senators Brown and Portman established.

As Senator PORTMAN noted at our hearing on these nominees, the members of the bipartisan screening commission committed significant time and effort to ensure that they recommended well-qualified candidates for the bench.

As a result of that process, we will soon vote on three distinguished nominees.

The first nominee to the Northern District of Ohio is Bridget Brennan.

For almost 15 years, Ms. Brennan has served as a prosecutor, rising through the ranks of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio.

Last year, as a testament to her skills and leadership, she was named Acting U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio.

Ms. Brennan has a wide breadth of experience, having led her office's Civil Rights and Criminal Divisions.

She has received a "Qualified" rating from the American Bar Association, has the strong support of Senators BROWN and PORTMAN, and received a bipartisan vote in the Judiciary Committee.

Ms. Brennan has demonstrated a commitment to justice, integrity, and the rule of law, all of which will serve her well as a district court judge.

We also will be considering Charles Fleming, another highly qualified nominee to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

Mr. Fleming is an experienced litigator who has demonstrated a decadeslong commitment to ensuring equal justice under the law. He has earned degrees from Kent State University and Case Western Reserve University Law School. After graduating, he spent a year working in private practice before dedicating his career to public service.

For more than three decades, Mr. Fleming has worked as an Assistant Federal Public Defender in the Northern District of Ohio. During this time, he has tried 17 cases to verdict and has gained a truly remarkable breadth of courtroom experience.

As I noted, Mr. Fleming has the strong support of Senators Brown and PORTMAN. He received a bipartisan vote in the Judiciary Committee. He also has received a "Well Qualified" rating from the American Bar Association.

He is clearly committed to maintaining a fair, respectful temperament in his courtroom and will decide cases based on the law, the facts, and precedent—not on his preferred outcome. He will make an excellent addition to the District Court.

Finally, we have David Ruiz. For more than 5 years, Judge Ruiz has served as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in the Northern District of Ohio. In this role, he has presided over more than 80 cases that have gone to verdict or judgment.

Prior to assuming the bench, Judge Ruiz served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for several years. And before that, he spent 10 years as a litigator in private practice.